

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A culture comprising a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture such that the bacterium reproducibly multiplies over time, wherein the bacterium is *Tropheryma whippelii*.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) A bacterium culture according to claim 1, wherein said bacterium is deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.
4. (Currently Amended) An isolated antigen isolated from the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium obtained from a culture according to claim 1.
5. (Previously Presented) An antigen according to claim 4, wherein said antigen is a protein having a molecular weight of about 35, 50, 60, 100 or 200 kD determined by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis using the Western blotting technique.
- 6-9. (Canceled)
10. (Previously Presented) An antigen according to claim 5, wherein said antigen is a protein of 200 kD, which reacts with a specific monoclonal antibody directed against the bacterium *Tropheryma whippelii* responsible for Whipple's disease or an antigen of said bacterium, said antibody being produced by a hybridoma deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under the Deposit No. I-2411.
11. (Currently Amended) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of diseases associated with infections caused by *Tropheryma whippelii*, comprising contacting serum or any other biological fluid of a patient with a culture according to claim 1 or a *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, obtained from said culture, and detecting an immunological reaction.
- 12-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method for the *in vitro* serological diagnosis according to claim 11, comprising:

- depositing a solution containing ~~the bacterium~~ said *Tropheryma whippelii* ~~responsible for Whipple's disease~~ bacterium in or on a solid support;
- introducing serum or any other biological fluid into or onto said support;
- introducing a solution of a labeled antibody specific for a human immunoglobulin, which recognizes said bacterium, into or onto the support;
- observing an incubation period;
- rinsing the solid support; and
- detecting an immunological reaction.

16-24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of diseases associated with infections caused by *Tropheryma whippelii*, comprising contacting serum or any other biological fluid of a patient with the antigen of claim 4, and detecting an immunological reaction.

26-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) A method for the *in vitro* serological diagnosis according to claim 25, comprising:

- depositing a solution containing ~~an~~ said antigen ~~of the bacterium~~ *Tropheryma whippelii* ~~responsible for Whipple's disease~~ in or on a solid support;
- introducing serum or any other biological fluid into or onto said support;
- introducing a solution of a labeled antibody specific for a human immunoglobulin, which recognizes said antigen, into or onto the support;
- observing an incubation period;
- rinsing the solid support; and

- detecting an immunological reaction.

30. (New) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said culture is not a cell culture in monocyte cells.

31. (New) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said culture is a cell culture in immortalized cells.

32. (New) A culture according to claim 31, wherein the immortalized cells are fibroblast cells.

33. (New) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said bacterium is of the same species as the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.